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ABSTRACT

The present study explored the relationship between student teacher satisfaction with the classroom internship and the assessment of the student teacher's classroom performance by the master teacher. Subjects were 50 college women randomly selected from seniors enrolled in the teacher education program of a 4-year Catholic liberal arts college. Following the subjects' 6-week experience in an elementary public school, each of the 50 master teachers was asked to rate her student teacher's overall classroom performance as either unsatisfactory, marginal, below average, average, above average, or outstanding. Each of the student teachers was asked to respond to a 32-item questionnaire developed by Ostrecher and Aikman to measure the degree of satisfaction with the student teaching experience. Results showed that those student teachers seen as either "outstanding" or "unsatisfactory" by their master teachers are the least satisfied, while higher levels of satisfaction are characteristic of student teachers in the "average" ranges. Further, item analyses revealed that although the high performing and low performing student teachers are about equally dissatisfied with their experience, the basis for each group's dissatisfaction is not the same. It is suggested that student teaching programs should be more individualized with respect to length of experience and degree of responsibility. (RT)

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The Relationship Between Satisfaction and Performance in Student Teaching

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Introduction

Teacher education programs, like pre-service programs in other professional fields, usually provide a variety of clinical experiences for future occupants of the professional role. One of these experiences, considered vital by many educators and required for certification in almost all states (Iannaccone & Button, 1964) is student teaching. Student teaching may be defined as that portion of a student's program when he/she spends a specified amount of time in a real classroom, working with children under the general supervision of a classroom teacher and a supervisor from the college with which he/she is affiliated.

Student teaching has several purposes and goals. Among these is that it gives the student (1) the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge that he/she has acquired (Brown & Banich, 1962), and (2) ". . . a planned, carefully supervised learning activity . . . which allows him not only to demonstrate but to improve his/her resourcefulness as a teacher in a real school setting." (Merrill, 1967). Even more important from the socialization and role learning point of view is the place of student teaching in easing the transition from the student role to the teacher role through exposure to the ideologies and value systems of the schools (Charters, 1963).

In view of the generally accepted importance of this student teaching experience, the available data as to its effectiveness are not encouraging. For example, it has been noted (e.g., McGee, 1955; Willard, 1955; Ryans, 1960)

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that teacher attitude is related to teacher performance. However, despite some evidence to the contrary (Sandgren & Schmidt, 1956), most investigators (e.g., Callis,1950; Day,1959) report a downward shift in attitudes following both student teaching and regular classroom teaching experience as teachers " . . . become less concerned with pupil freedom and more concerned with establishing a stable, orderly classroom . . . " (Rabinowitz & Rosenbaum,1960). Since no parallel shift is seen among teacher education graduates who are not teaching (Rabinowitz & Rosenbaum, 1960), the question arises as to whether the student teaching experience is somewhat counter productive in leading some promising teachers to careers outside the classroom. In an effort to begin focusing on this issue, the present study was undertaken to explore the relationship between the student teacher satisfaction with the classroom internship and the assessment of the student teacher's classroom performance by the master teacher.

Procedures

Subjects were fifty college women randomly selected from seniors enrolled in the teacher education department of a four-year catholic liberal arts college. Following the subjects' six-week internship in an elementary public school, each of the fifty master teachers was asked to rate her intern's overall classroom performance as either unsatisfactory, marginal, below average, average, above average, or outstanding.

Each of the student teachers was asked to respond to a 32-item questionnaire developed by Ostrecher & Aikman (Mitzel & Aikman, 1954) to measure the degree of satisfaction with the student teaching experience. This satisfaction scale was based on the rationale that wide differences existed among student teachers with respect to their affective reactions to their first practical work in the schools. The items sample the student's reactions to the master

teacher, the college supervisor, the pupils, etc., and each item provides the respondent with three choices. Since it is characteristically difficult to get persons to give negative reactions to situations which are approached directly, two of the choices were indicative of dissatisfaction with an aspect of the student teaching situation while the third was designed to reflect a positive reaction to that same aspect. As its authors point out " . . . the purpose of the satisfaction scale was not an evaluation of the adequacy of the student teaching environment. It was, rather, an attempt to evaluate the student's subjective reaction to her particular set of experiences, without trying to assess these experiences directly." (Mitzel & Aikman, 1954)

Individuals give only one response to each of the scale's 32 items. All positive responses are counted as +1 and all negative responses as zero; thus, scores were free to vary between 0 and 32. Using Hoyt's analysis of variance approach, the reliability of the satisfaction scale was reported as +.84.

Results

The frequency distribution of the master teachers' evaluations is presented in Table 1, the six-point scale yielding a mean and standard deviation of 4.6 and 1.5 respectively. As can be seen from the table, the distribution has a

Table 1 about here

marked negative skew with 40% of the student teachers being judged as outstanding while only 18% were seen as either marginal or unsatisfactory. The distribution of the student teacher satisfaction scores is shown in Table 2. They covered a considerable range, running from a low of 7 to a high of 29 on the 32-point scale, in a roughly symmetric distribution with a mean and standard deviation of 18.5 and

Table 2 about here

6.5 respectively. A further check on the reliability of these satisfaction scores produced a corrected split-half reliability coefficient of +.89(±.03), a somewhat higher value than reported by the scale's original authors.

The central area of concern in the present study was the relationship between expressed satisfaction and master teacher assessment, and in terms of this relationship, the product moment correlation between the two variables was -.02(±.14). This suggested that there was no relationship at all between the adequacy of the student teacher's actual performance - as seen by the master teacher - and the student teacher's satisfaction with that performance. However, in a closer inspection of the data, i.e., in examining the mean satisfaction score of the student teachers at each of the assessed performance levels, a rather definite pattern emerged. Thus, there appeared to be a continuous rise in the mean satisfaction level, beginning with the 'unsatisfactory' student teachers ($\bar{X}$ = 8.0) and proceeding through the student teachers assessed as 'marginal' ($\bar{X}$ = 16.7), 'below average' ($\bar{X}$ = 21.8), 'average' ($\bar{X}$ = 22.9), and 'above average' ($\bar{X}$ = 25.3). This apparent linear pattern was, however, reversed when the best performing student teachers were considered. The mean satisfaction score of the 'outstanding' student teachers was 14.3 which represented a lower level than any of the other groups except those seen as 'unsatisfactory.'

Therefore, it was not that there was no relationship between master teacher assessment and student teacher satisfaction but rather that the linear model was an inappropriate way for describing it. Thus, correlation ratio procedures - appropriate for describing both linear and curvilinear relationships - yielded an eta coefficient of +.81 for predicting student teacher satisfaction from master teacher grades. Using the one percent significance level and as presented in Table 3, this eta coefficient is (a) statistically significant

Table 3 about here

and (b) indicative of a non-chance departure from linearity. The nature of this non-linear relationship seems to be best illustrated by a parabolic curve, the greatest satisfaction being expressed by student teachers toward the middle of the grade range while much lower satisfaction levels are characteristic of interns seen as either very poor or excellent by their master teachers.

Two subscales were extracted from the 32-item satisfaction scale. These were (a) a 15-item scale dealing with the student teacher's feelings about his/her relationships with the college and school supervisors, and (b) a 10-item scale dealing directly with the student teacher's evaluation of his/her own performance. The correlational analyses were repeated as with the total scale scores, and the results were virtually identical. The product moment correlations between master teacher assessment and student satisfaction were -.05($\pm$.14) and +.02($\pm$.14) for the 15-item and the 10-item subscales respectively while the corresponding eta coefficients(cf. Table 3) for predicting student teacher satisfaction from master teacher grades were +.80 and +.83. Further, the nature of the curvilinear relationship was the same for the subscales as for the total scale scores. That is, as presented in Table 4, both the 'unsatisfactory' and the 'outstanding' student teachers were relatively dissatisfied with their internship experience,

Table 4 about here

while greater degrees of satisfaction characterized students whose performance was assessed toward the middle of the range.

Given that the 'outstanding' and the 'marginal' or 'unsatisfactory' student teachers were equally dissatisfied with their student teaching in general, were the sources of their dissatisfaction the same ? In order to probe this issue, the specific responses of a 'high' group - five 'outstanding' students with satisfaction scale scores of 7,8,9,11, and 16 - were compared with those of a 'low' group - five 'unsatisfactory' or 'marginal' students matched with the 'high' group in terms of their satisfaction scale scores.

The analysis of the item responses revealed that in 11 of the 32 items there was complete agreement within each of the groups, all five student teachers <u>within</u> it selecting the same option. Although in each of these cases, both groups selected options indicating dissatisfaction with an aspect of student teaching, the particular dissatisfaction selected by each was different. The particular options chosen by the 'high' and 'low' groups are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 about here

As can be seen from this table, the 'high' group found the supervision not critical enough while the'low'group found it too critical; while the 'high' group felt that they had assumed responsibility for their class too late in the student teaching period, the 'low'group found they were given teaching responsibilities too early; while the 'high' group felt that they were not able to use their own plans enough, the 'low' group found that they were required to use their own plans too often; while the high group found the classroom too teacher dominated and subject centered, the 'low' group found the classroom too easygoing and child centered. The pattern repeats itself again and again; the 'outstanding' and the 'marginal' and 'unsatisfactory' student teachers are equally dissatisfied but for quite different reasons.

Conclusion

In summary, there appears to be a close relationship between a student teacher's satisfaction with a student teaching experience and the evaluation of that student teacher by the master teacher in whose class the student is working. This relationship, however, is not linear; as described above, those student teachers seen as either 'outstanding' of 'unsatisfactory' by their master teachers are the least satisfied while higher levels of satisfaction are characteristic of student teachers in the 'average' ranges. Further, item analyses revealed that although the high performing and low performing student teachers are about equally dissatisfied with their student teaching experience, the basis for each group's dissatisfaction is not the same.

Despite the limitations of this study among which are (a) its restriction to a particular teacher education program in which students have only a single six week classroom internship, and (b) the possible questions concerning the validity of the master teacher's assessments (Bach,1952; Seagoe, 1957), the present data do suggest the necessity of some rethinking of the student teaching experience.

— For example, given the dissatisfaction of the 'outstanding' student teachers, will these students be lost to the profession ? It is true that for the outstanding teacher, the dissonance of dissatisfaction may be perceived as an exciting challenge. It is also true that many of their difficulties seem related to their lack of independence in the master teacher's classroom (cf. Table 5), something which will not be a problem even in their first teaching position. Will they, however, remain in the profession until that first position ?

Aside from the particular problem of the dissatisfied, but 'outstanding,' student teachers, the responses to the satisfaction scale indicate that the student teaching experience is simply too standardized. Some of the students are ready for immediate classroom responsibility while others are not; some would be more at home in a child-centered classroom while others would find it easier to acclimatize in a subject-centered environment; some are anxious and ready to experiment with their own materials while others may initially need the security of a packaged lesson. Therefore, it would seem that individualized instruction needs to be brought to bear on teacher as well as on pupil education. The internship is central to professional preparation, but more resources must be devoted to its articulation and operation if it is to be adequate to the task. For example, (a) diagnostic procedures are necessary to assess both the readiness of the student teacher and the appropriateness of the 'match' with the master teachers, (b) college supervision needs to be a good deal more continuous and less desultory in order to assess the nature of the ongoing experience and make the appropriate adjustments, and (c) the length of the internship should be flexible so that students may remain apprentices until they are seen as ready for their first independent classroom assignment. Such changes may lead not only to great satisfaction but also in the long run to more adequate classroom performance.

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Table 1

Distribution of Master Teacher Evaluations
(N=50)

Evaluation	Scale Value	Frequency
Outstanding	6	20
Above Average	5	11
Average	4	8
Below Average	3	5
Marginal	2	3
Unsatisfactory	1	3

Table 2

Distribution of Student Teacher Satisfaction Scores
(N=50)

Satisfaction Score	Frequency
26 - 30	9
21 - 25	12
16 - 20	12
11 - 15	10
6 - 10	7

Table 3

Eta Coefficients for Predicting Student Teacher Satisfaction from Master Teacher Grades (N=50)

Satisfaction Scale	Eta	Statistical Significance ($F_{5,44}$)	Linearity Test ($F_{4,44}$)
Total Scale (n=32)	+.81	16.6 **	20.5 **
Subscale 1- Satisfaction with Supervisors (n=15)	+.80	16.0**	19.9**
Subscale 2- Satisfaction with own Performance (n=10)	+.83	18.6**	24.6**

** statistically significant at the one percent level

Table 4

Mean Subscale Scores at Various Grade Levels

Grade Level	Mean Satisfaction Scores Subscale 1 (n=15)	Subscale 2 (n=10)
Outstanding	6.8	4.3
Above Average	12.4	7.8
Average	11.1	6.9
Below Average	10.4	6.4
Marginal	8.0	5.0
Unsatisfactory	4.3	2.3

Table 5

Dissatisfactions of 'High' and 'Low' Performance Student Teachers

Scale Item	'High' Group (N=5)	'Low' Group (N=5)
3	The master teacher is not critical enough	The master teacher is overly critical
4	I was made responsible for the class too late	I was made responsible for the class too early
6	The college supervisor was not critical enough	The college supervisor was too critical
12	The school's regulations were vague	The school's regulations were unnecessary
13	My teaching assignments were not varied enough	My teaching assignments were too varied
15	My own plans were not used often enough	My own plans were needed a little too often
22	The classroom atmosphere was too teacher dominated	The classroom atmosphere was too easygoing
26	Student teaching should be better organized	Some other activity should be substituted for student teaching
27	The master teacher was unable to find enough things to keep me busy	The master teacher was not considerate of the amount of outside work I had to do
28	My master teacher was too subject centered	My master teacher was too child centered.